



Bothenhampton & Walditch

Parish Council since 1886

Mr C Loder
Member of Parliament for West Dorset

By email
9th April 2021

Dear Mr Loder

RE: CORONAVIRUS – PHYSICAL PARISH MEETINGS

We greatly appreciate your efforts on our behalf however please consider our points below:

- 1: no meeting place that complies with COVID regulations will be available in our parish within the foreseeable future for the use of the Parish Council.
- 2: even if one were available, social distancing and mask-wearing would make it difficult for the clerk to hear participants. This point also applies to the Chair when conducting meeting business.
- 3: residents will decide whether to attend any meeting irrespective of the Minister's opinion. Waiving of the precautions would require all attendees to produce evidence of having received a vaccine, which would be undemocratic. Residents may be reluctant to attend for this reason.
- 4: the Parish Council could agree not to meet physically or remotely until January 2022, but with no firm prospect of being able to do so if a new COVID variant appears.

Currently, open Zoom meetings allow us to effectively conduct Parish Council business including authorising payments for essential services, make grants to community groups supporting self-isolating individuals or mental health services, and respond to consultation documents, in the presence of any residents who respond to our Zoom invitations. This would have to be replaced by emergency powers allowing the clerk special authority.

Finally, we have adjusted and adapted to meeting remotely and would value the flexibility of being able to combine remote and physical meetings within our meetings schedule. The flexibility of being able to meet remotely may also help us to recruit parish councillors, who generally have busy lives and are unable to commit to attending physical meetings every month.

Yours sincerely

Cllr A J Basker
Chairman
Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council
clerk@bothenhamptonwalditchparishcouncil.com
Website www.bothenhamptonwalditchparishcouncil.com